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ABSTRACT

This health curriculum is intended to help teachers deal with some of today's adolescent health issues: (1) alcoholism (issues surrounding family alcoholism); (2) relationships (stereotyping and teen friendships); (3) Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (insight into what it is like to live with HIV); (4) date abuse (relationships and gender roles); (5) sexual orientation (promotes support for gay and lesbian youth, and heterosexual understanding of what it is like to be gay in U.S. society); and (6) teen pregnancy (teen sexuality and parenting responsibilities). Each of the six units in the guide uses a program from the "Degrassi" public television series as a springboard for an in-depth exploration of an adolescent health issue. Included in each unit is background information, three or four lessons supported by reproducible student handouts, and a list of readings and resources for both students and teachers. While the first lesson in each unit uses a "Degrassi" program as a starting point for discussion, other lessons approach the unit's topic from different perspectives and can be used with students who have not viewed the corresponding "Degrassi" video. (LL)

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DeGrassi Health Education Curriculum

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By Robin J. Kirsch

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Contents

The WGBH Educational Foundation has developed this health curriculum to help teachers deal with some of today's most important adolescent health issues: alcoholism, relationships, HIV/AIDS, date abuse, sexual orientation, and teen pregnancy.

Each of the six units in the curriculum uses a program from the award-winning *Degrassi* public television series as a springboard for an in-depth exploration of an adolescent health issue. Included in each unit is background information, three or four lessons supported by reproducible student handouts, and a list of readings and resources for both students and teachers.

While the first lesson in each unit uses a *Degrassi* program as a starting point for discussion, other lessons approach the unit's topic from different perspectives and can be used with students who have not viewed the corresponding *Degrassi* video.

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To Order Videos

The six videos that correspond to this curriculum are available at a special price: $50 plus shipping per program and $300 plus shipping for all six. To order videos, contact:

Direct Cinema
P.O. Box 10003
Santa Monica, CA 90410
(310) 396-4774
(800) 525-0000

Other *Degrassi* programs are also available from Direct Cinema. Call for more information.

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Alcoholism

About this Unit

This unit uses the *Degrassi Junior High* episode "Bottled Up" as a springboard for discussion about family alcoholism and teen alcohol use. The components are:

- **"Bottled Up"** 30-minute video
- **Background Information on Family Alcoholism**
- **About the Video**
- **Lesson 1: Discussion Guide and Worksheet**
  A question-and-answer sheet relating to the video for students to complete as homework. The completed worksheets are then used to spark discussion about the video.
- **Lesson 2: BAC Wheel**
  An activity creating and using blood alcohol content wheels to help students understand the effects of alcohol.
- **Lesson 3: Advertising**
  An activity to help students be critical viewers of alcohol advertising.
- **Lesson 4: Parent/Adult Interview**
  An article about an alcohol-related death for students to discuss and to use for an adult interview.
- **Readings and Resources**

Additional Activities

If teachers want to assign research topics in addition to these lessons, the list is endless: drinking and pregnancy, drinking and the law, drunk-driving legislation, the physical effects of alcohol, alcohol and its relation to crime, alcohol use in medicine, effective treatment and prevention of alcoholism, the designated-driver concept, or compiling a local resource list.

Discussion topics can range from determining the most appropriate drinking age and situations, punishment for drunk driving, warning labels on alcohol, alcohol advertising and television, and responsibility of server vs. consumer of alcohol. Students could brainstorm or role-play refusal techniques and substitutions for alcohol consumption at parties.

Background Information on Family Alcoholism

One in every 11 Americans has a drinking problem according to a 1991 study in *Alcohol Health and Research World*. Alcoholism not only affects the addict but his or her family as well. An average of 25 percent to 33 percent of students are adversely affected by a parent's drinking. For these students, the parent's alcoholism represents a significant loss of stability, guidance, care, and a myriad of concerns that children are not equipped to comprehend fully. The response of the other parent is also critical for children. If there is denial or assistance with the drinking behavior (enabling), a new dimension of problems is added to the child's life.

The most common reaction for children is also denial. They will often cover up their feelings and lie to their peers about what is going on. In addition, children whose parents have a drinking problem will feel confused, angry, guilty, anxious, and insecure. It is helpful for them to learn the 3 *C*s about parental drinking: They didn't *cause* it, they can't *control* it, and they can't *cure* it.

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Experts have identified four roles that children may adopt to cope with their parents' drinking. They are the hero, the lost child, the clown, and the scapegoat or troublemaker. The hero becomes super-responsible and assumes many of the chores not being handled by the parent. This child may also try to achieve success academically, athletically, or otherwise to compensate for the recognition not given at home.

The lost child copes by trying to be invisible, both at home and at school. The clown uses humor to entertain and connect with the family and to deflect the pain he or she is facing. The scapegoat may either be a troublemaker or act out in self-destructive ways. This child seeks attention and is often the first to be identified for helpful services. However, it is easier for the family to blame this child than admit the underlying cause for the outbursts and disruptions.

Although understanding these roles may make it easier for the teacher to spot a student in need of assistance, not all troubled students will assume one of these roles. Students may display other behavior that will alert the teacher to family problems. Any dysfunctional family situation can affect a child's behavior and performance in school.

One source of help for students is Alateen, a part of Al-Anon that teaches young teens the facts about alcoholism so they may better understand their parent's drinking and feel supported by other children in similar circumstances. Students should also be made aware of the resources in their own school and community.

About the Video

Synopsis

Some Degrassi students are going to be contestants on a televised quiz show that generates a lot of interest at school. When a teacher suggests they watch a video from a previous show to help prepare them for the competition, the students need to find a home with a VCR. Despite Kathleen's objections, her house is chosen and her classmates are exposed to her mother's alcoholism. Kathleen is further embarrassed when her mother fails to show up for the quiz show taping and strands her without a ride home.

Kathleen's friend Caitlin tries to encourage her to acknowledge her mother's alcohol problem and get help for herself. Kathleen resists her efforts but seeks help when Rick admits a similar problem in his family.

A secondary plot line involves two seventh-grade boys who want to improve their image by imitating Rick, a kid they consider cool because he smokes.

Degrassi Characters

Kathleen: An extremely bright, temperamental student who is the subject of many unfortunate events through the life of the series. In this episode, her mother is an alcoholic, which may help to explain Kathleen's anorexia and her involvement with an abusive boyfriend in later episodes.

Caitlin: A bright, caring student. Interested in Rick.

Rick: The cool smoker. His family situation is also troublesome. His father physically abused him and he now lives with his brother. He's interested in Caitlin.

Nancy and **Tim:** Two other students chosen for the quiz show.

Scooter and **[illegible]:** The two younger kids hoping to improve their image.

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Lesson 1 – Thinking About the Video

Objective

The objective of this lesson is to help students deal with the difficult issues surrounding family alcoholism that are raised by the video.

Procedure

Before class, photocopy the accompanying handout (pp. 6–8). After viewing the video in class, distribute the worksheet to students to be completed as homework so that students are prepared to discuss their answers in class the following day. Since there is so much information about alcoholism that students may or may not know, this assignment presents an opportunity to fill in blank spots without resorting to lecture.

It is important to remember that in a class of 30 students, an average of 25 percent to 33 percent may have been or are currently affected by a parent or other family member with a drinking problem. They may or may not choose to participate and their boundaries should be respected. By focusing on Kathleen and her mother, students can explore the problem without disclosing information about their own situations.

The concept of "enabler" should be clarified for students so that they see how a non-drinking parent can help or hinder the addict from recovery. Reasons for this should be explored as well. In addition, "enablers" can assist with other behaviors (such as overeating, irresponsibility, child abuse, sexual abuse, favoritism). In addition to alcoholism, students could also explore other family situations that present difficulties, such as divorce, illness, aging grandparents, and unemployment.

If students are unfamiliar with the resources in their school and community, they should be provided with that information. Making such a list could be a group project after discussing the homework assignment. (One group could look up hotlines; another group, local agencies; and a third group, school personnel.)

Lesson 2 – Blood Alcohol Content

Objective

This lesson helps students understand the effects of different types of alcoholic beverages on the body. Be sure to stress that the legal drinking age in the United States is 21 and the blood alcohol content wheel is not intended to be used as a measure of how much they can drink without getting caught.

Materials Needed

scissors
gold fasteners
ballpoint pens

Procedure

Before class, gather together the materials listed above and photocopy the blood alcohol content (BAC) wheel instruction pages and worksheets (pp. 8–11). Have students follow the directions on the BAC wheel handout to make their own BAC wheels. After students cut out the first circle, students can cut the holes marked "Cut Out" by tracing over the lines several times with a ballpoint pen. This will make the "Cut Out" come out easily.

Write on the board the BAC of people of various weights after two drinks. Also show how many drinks it takes to make these people legally drunk (at .1). Students may observe that smaller, lighter people get drunk more quickly than bigger, heavier ones. Remind students that not everyone acts the same when drunk. Acting drunk is not the same as measuring drunk. In addition, such factors as body chemistry, a full or empty stomach, medications, and predisposition to addiction affect a person's reaction to alcohol.

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Lesson 3 – Alcohol Advertising

Objective

This lesson helps students critically examine alcohol advertising.

Procedure

Before class, photocopy the alcohol advertising handout (pp. 12–13). Distribute it to students and have them complete it as homework. In addition to the ads students cut out, teachers should also gather a collection of advertisements to discuss.

Alcohol ads generally imply that the product:

- increases social contact (people in groups laughing and drinking, holiday festivities, and other celebrations)
- increases athletic ability (sports figures with alcohol)
- increases sexual pleasure (people acting either overtly or covertly sexual)
- increases wealth and status (the rich star drinking)
- increases intelligence (the smart drinker)
- increases talent (famous person in a known field)
- increases health (association with fresh air and outdoors)
- improves the user's image (like Spuds McKenzie, the Bud dog)

With each ad, students can determine what image the advertiser is trying to convey and how the ad accomplishes it. Focusing on the types of men and women portrayed in ads and their relationships can also lead to another discussion about how advertisers use sex to sell products.

Lesson 4 – "Death Was 80 Proof"

Objective

This lesson helps students to consider parental and teen responsibility, passive participation, and guilt.

Procedure

Before class, photocopy the *Boston Globe* article and accompanying handout (pp. 14–16). Read the article aloud during the last 10–15 minutes of a class period. Review the questions in the handout and the adult interview assignment. (If you choose instead to read the article at the beginning of class, the discussion might allow students to think carefully about their written answers for the following day.)

Because the article raises issues of passive participation and guilt, it usually generates a lot of discussion. Younger students may be quick to blame the parents of the two boys for going out. Since the boys in the article are 16 and 18, students should be encouraged to examine their own ability to stay home without adult supervision. It will also bring up discussion about whether or not it is appropriate for parents to ask for information about their children's whereabouts and if there will be chaperones at a party.

Whenever an alcohol curriculum is presented, there are inevitably other newsworthy stories that can be incorporated into the lesson, like a celebrity or sports figure involved in an alcohol-related incident or recent local tragedy. Some college fraternities are losing their operating licenses because of dangerous alcohol "hazing" practices that have resulted in death. The Exxon *Valdez* oil spill is also presumed to have been alcohol related. Students should be encouraged to cut out newspaper and magazine articles that are relevant to this topic.

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Thinking About the Video

Directions: Answer the questions after viewing the *Degrassi Junior High* episode "Bottled Up," in which Kathleen's friends discover her mother has a drinking problem.

1. How do you think Kathleen feels about her mother's drinking? Explain your answer.

2. How is Kathleen affected by her mother's drinking? If it weren't for the quiz show, would her mother's alcoholism have been an issue? Why?

3. Kathleen's friends say that she needs to get help. Do you think she needs to get help? Why might she resist seeking help?

4. Do you think Kathleen's father knows about her mother's drinking? What do you think he should be doing about it? Why might he decide to do nothing?

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5. Kathleen confronts her mother about her drinking. How could that be helpful? How could it be harmful? Do you think you would be able to confront a friend or family member with a drinking problem?

6. Why do you think Kathleen responds negatively to Caitlin's advice and gratefully to Rick's suggestions?

7. Caitlin tries to talk to Kathleen about her mother. At first Rick says she should mind her own business. What can a friend do if there is a problem?

8. If you wanted to help a friend who had a difficult family situation, whom could you talk to? What is one way to make sure your friend got help? What would you do if he or she didn't want help?

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Blood Alcohol Content

Directions: Read the following information. Cut out the BAC wheel and fasten it to the weight in pounds wheel following the instructions on the handout. Using your BAC wheels, answer the questions.

Introduction

Blood alcohol content (BAC) is the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream. It can be measured by a breathalyzer, blood test, or urine test.

A 12-ounce can of beer, a five-ounce glass of wine, a wine cooler, and a shot of hard liquor contain the *same amount of alcohol,* about one-half ounce. The hard liquor has the highest percentage of alcohol (50% if it is 100 proof). Wine and wine coolers contain 12%–20% alcohol, and most beers contain 4%–6% alcohol.

In the United States, a person is legally drunk when his or her BAC is 0.1. On average, each drink increases a person's BAC by about 0.02. (For people who weigh less than 150 pounds, BAC will increase more for each drink.) Therefore, after five drinks, a 150-pound person will be legally drunk.

At a BAC level of 0.3 or above, a person is in danger of becoming unconscious. At 0.4 or higher, a person is likely to stop breathing and may go into a coma and die.

Factors that Influence How Drunk a Person Gets

- how much alcohol is consumed at one time
- how fast the alcohol is consumed
- how much the person weighs
- the person's past experience with alcohol (tolerance)
- how much food the person has eaten before drinking
- what the person expects and wants the alcohol to do for him/her
- how the person feels (mood) before drinking
- where the person drinks (i.e., at a party, alone)
- gender – because females generally have more body fat than males, their bodies absorb alcohol at a faster rate
- what other people expect the person to do when drunk (get silly or rowdy)

Getting Sober

It takes the liver an hour to an hour and a half to metabolize each one-half ounce of alcohol (the equivalent of one drink). Time is the only factor that will allow the body to get rid of the alcohol. Coffee, cold showers, raw eggs, fruit juices, and fresh air will not speed up this process.

Using your BAC wheel, answer the following questions. These questions are for informational and demonstration purposes only: the legal drinking age in the United States is 21.

1. What is your BAC after two drinks?

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2. How many drinks will bring your BAC to 0.1 (legally drunk)?

3. How many drinks can you have before you risk coma and death (0.4)?

4. What is the only way to reduce BAC once a person has had something to drink?

5. John weighs 120 pounds and has three beers. What is his BAC? Is he legally drunk?

6. Would you drive with him? Why or why not?

7. What would you do if he drove you to a party and he was your only ride home?

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Instructions

1. Cut out the circle marked blood alcohol content wheel.
2. Trace over the two sections marked "cut out" with a ballpoint pen until they pop out.
3. Put the cut-out circle on top of the other sheet of paper and carefully fasten them together at the stars (centers) with a gold fastener.

Reprinted from Peter Finn and Judith Platt, Alcohol and Alcohol Safety, volume 2. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972.

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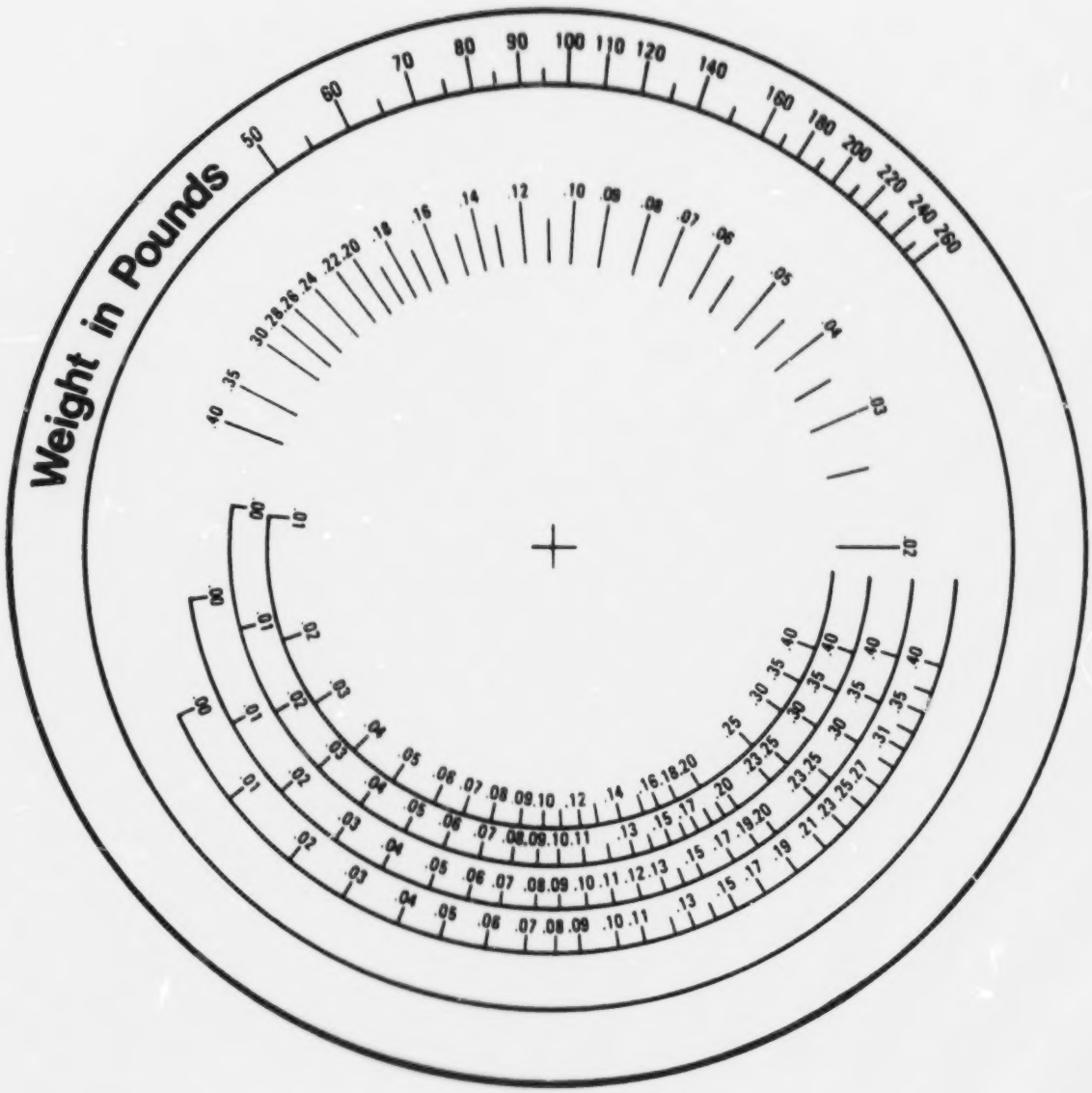

Reprinted from Peter Finn and Judith Platt, *Alcohol and Alcohol Safety*, volume 2. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972.

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Alcohol Advertising

Directions: Cut out an advertisement from any magazine that features an alcoholic product (beer, wine, wine cooler, hard liquor). Answer the following questions based on your ad. You may also choose a television ad provided you can bring it to class on videotape and there is equipment available to show it.

1. What product is the advertisement selling? What message is the ad delivering to its readers?

2. What techniques or images does the advertiser use to convey this message? Is this ad believable? Why or why not?

3. Do you think this ad is aimed at a particular age, gender, or other group (such as athletes, wealthy people, minorities, women, teens)? What makes you think so?

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4. What information should the reader be aware of that is not included in this advertisement?

5. What would you do to make the advertisement more honest and true? How would you change the wording or images?

6. Rewrite your ad to show the product more honestly.

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"Death Was 80 Proof"

Directions: Read the article from the *Boston Globe* and answer the questions below. Then have a parent or other adult read the article and interview them using the questions provided. *Note:* In 1983, when this article was published, the legal drinking age in Massachusetts was 18.

1. Who do you think is most responsible for Craig Handler's death? Explain your answer.

2. Name three ways this tragedy could have been avoided.

3. If you were the Benson parents, would you punish your sons for having the party? Why? What would the punishment be?

4. Do you think someone at the party knew about the dangers of intoxication and poisoning? What do you think prevented that person from stopping the chugging contest? What do you think prevented people from helping Craig once he got sick?

5. If you were at a party where a similar event happened, what do you think you would do?

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Adult Interview

Have a parent or other adult read the *Boston Globe* article. Then interview the adult and write his or her answers to the questions below.

1. Who do you think is most responsible for Craig Handler's death? Explain your answer.

2. Whose responsibility is it to make sure that people drink responsibly and that people under the legal drinking age don't drink? If you were the Benson parents, would you punish your sons for having the party? What would the punishment be?

3. Why do you think no one came forward to stop the chugging contest? What do you think prevented people from helping Craig once he got sick?

4. What do you believe you can do to make sure this doesn't happen to me or other young people you care about?

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"Death Was 80 Proof"

by Peggy Hernandez, January 1983*

(Reprinted courtesy of the *Boston Globe*)

The telephone call police received at 11:08 Saturday night was that an ambulance was needed for a drunken person at a party, according to Police Chief Steven Dray.

But police knew immediately on arrival that this was no routine drunk case, Dray said yesterday. Officers tried to revive the victim with cardiopulmonary resuscitation in the ambulance, but he was dead on arrival at the hospital.

Dray said the victim, Craig Handler, 19, had swallowed a quart of 80-proof Southern Comfort within 15 minutes on top of five beers, while others at the party cheered him on.

Medical Examiner Robert Clay said Handler died of cardiac arrest and acute alcoholism.

The police chief said that "some of the people at the party were telling Handler to 'go, go, go,' or something to that effect while he was drinking."

According to Dray, Handler was in the kitchen of the house where the party was being held when he passed out. "People laid him on the floor of the kitchen, then someone noticed that he had begun vomiting blood. Some guests took him outside and walked him around to get some fresh air. After a while, they laid him down inside an enclosed porch," Dray said.

Dray said that about a half hour later, some new guests arrived at the party and found Handler unconscious on the porch. Dray quoted them as saying that Handler's neck and lips were blue and they could find no pulse. That's when they called the police, who arrived in three minutes.

Dray said there were between 16 and 20 youths between the ages of 16 and 19 at the party, at a house belonging to John and Michelle Benson.

According to Dray, the Bensons, who have two sons, 16 and 18, were away for the evening and unaware of the party. Dray added that the Bensons told him they had left strict orders that there were to be no guests or parties while they were gone...

* The names in this story have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.

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Readings and Resources

Readings

A Fragile Peace, by Jonellen Heckler. New York: Putnam, 1986.

Different Like Me, by Evelyn Leite and Pamela Espeland. Minneapolis: Johnson Institute Books, 1987.

Teens Talk About Alcohol and Alcoholism, edited by Paul Dolmetsch and Gail Mauricette. New York: Doubleday, Dolphin, 1987.

What Will My Friends Say, by Jane Clayppol Miner. New York: Pocket Books, Archway, 1986.

Resources

Alanon Family Group
P.O. Box 862
Midtown Station
New York, NY 10018-0862
(800) 302-7240 or (212) 302-7240
For families and friends of substance abusers.
Also check local phone book for **Alateen.**

Alcoholics Anonymous
World Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
(212) 686-1100 or local chapter

National Association for
Children of Alcoholics
31582 Coast Highway, Suite B
South Laguna, CA 92677
(714) 499-3889

National Clearinghouse for
Alcohol and Drug Information
P.O. Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20852
(800) SAY-NOTO

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Relationships

About this Unit

This unit uses the *Degrassi Junior High* episode "Great Expectations" as a springboard for discussion about stereotyping, teen friendships, and relationships. The components of this unit are:

- **"Great Expectations"** 30-minute video
- **About the Video**
- **Lesson 1: Discussion Guide and Worksheet**
  A question-and-answer sheet relating to the video for students to complete as homework. The completed worksheets are then used as a basis for class discussion about relationships and sexuality.
- **Lesson 2: Parent/Adult Interview**
  A list of questions for students to ask an adult about friendship. This interview gives students the opportunity to compare their views about friendship with those of an adult and encourages discussion.
- **Lesson 3: Group Work**
  A group assignment designed to help students identify the qualities they value most in a friend and in a boyfriend or a girlfriend.
- **Readings and Resources**

Additional Activities

Because Liz looks different from other girls he knows, Joey assumes she must "do it" and so seeks her out as his sexual partner. Many adolescents (and adults too) make the mistaken assumption that there is a relationship between appearance and behavior. Teachers may want to explore the notion of stereotypes and how they apply in our society. If students list the many stereotypes they encounter, it is important to examine how these limit, exploit, or harm the people or groups they involve.

If teachers want to further explore the issue of stereotypes, they could cut out pictures from magazines of different kinds of people and ask students what job they think each one has, who is married, who has kids, who is wealthy, who is a criminal, who is gay, who is athletic, who is intelligent, etc. Ask students how they arrived at their conclusions and discuss why people tend to judge others based on superficial attributes. (This idea was adapted from an exercise in *Sex Education: Teacher's Guide and Resource Manual,* by Steven Bignell, published by Planned Parenthood in 1982.)

About the Video

Synopsis

Joey has decided he needs sexual experience and mistakenly believes the new student Liz will want to have sex with him. He befriends her in school and asks her to be his partner for a class assignment. During a study period, he tries to flatter Liz and encourages her to meet him after school to work on their project. Joey buys some condoms and goes to Liz's house, where he asks her to "do it." Liz refuses and immediately kicks him out. Joey later realizes he "totally messed up."

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In a subplot, the class president Stephanie goes to extreme lengths to attract Simon's attention. Another story centers on Arthur's concerns that he must be a "pervert" because of his frequent wet dreams. He and his friend Yick call into a radio program on sexuality, and his fears are allayed when Dr. Sally explains on air that frequent wet dreams at Arthur's age are very normal.

Degrassi Characters

- **Liz:** A new student who thinks Degrassi kids are unfriendly and unaccepting. Rumors fly about why she transferred schools.
- **Spike:** Liz's first friend at Degrassi. Spike is pregnant in this episode and beginning to show.
- **Joey:** A popular boy who is eager for a sexual experience.
- **Wheels** and **Snake:** Joey's friends who question Joey's assumption that Liz wants to have sex with him.
- **Stephanie:** Class president who won the election by exchanging kisses with boys for votes.
- **Simon:** A boy who Stephanie would like to date, but who appears uninterested.
- **Arthur** (Stephanie's brother): A seventh-grader coming to terms with his puberty.
- **Yick:** Arthur's friend who encourages him to get accurate information.

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Lesson 1 – Thinking About the Video

Objective

This lesson will help students examine why people form opinions about others based solely on their appearance, and the dangers of stereotyping.

Procedure

This assignment (pp. 22–23) should be distributed as homework after students have seen the video, so students will be prepared to discuss their answers the following day in class.

In this lesson, students should be encouraged to explore the factors that influence their choice of clothing, hairstyle, or interests. Are there groups in the school that are identified by one characteristic (such as jocks, brainy students, hoods, druggies, preppies)? Do these labels reflect everything about the people they describe? Students will disagree about whether or not clothing sends a message. Ask them how they expect a teacher to dress and whether it would matter if a teacher wore jeans with holes and a T-shirt. (How would students feel if their doctor did?) Talk about the message an expensive business suit sends. Have students examine the clothing worn by rock stars and whether it would matter if the same musicians performed in ties and jackets. Who determines what styles become popular?

The question about how Joey approached Liz may lead into a discussion on what constitutes a healthy relationship. When students talk about Joey's lines, they can list other lines people use and ways to counter them. Sol Gordon's book *Seduction Lines Heard 'Round the World and Answers You Can Give,* for grades 9 through 12, is a helpful resource (see Readings and Resources).

Students should also explore Liz's role in the situation. Is it safe to invite someone over without a parent home? If Joey really does like Liz and wants another chance to date her, how can he try to regain her trust? Should she accept an apology and try to be friends? This issue may lead into a discussion about what behaviors are unacceptable in a relationship.

Lesson 2 – Parent/Adult Interview

Objective

This assignment provides an opportunity for students to hear an adult's thoughts about his or her own friendships and how they have changed since high school. It is also hoped that some adults will present strategies for dealing with friendship problems that students can share with the class.

Procedure

Students will be asked to interview an adult (parent, other relative, teacher, friend) using the questions on the handout (pp. 24–25). After the interview, there are questions for the student to answer.

In this assignment adults and students are asked what conditions would cause them to end a friendship. Answers should be listed on the board in two columns (the two lists will probably be similar). Each student may have a different tolerance threshold when it comes to ending a friendship, and it may be helpful to have a show of hands to indicate how many feel the behavior listed is unacceptable. The qualities adults would like their children to value in friends should also be listed. Students might be questioned whether they agree or disagree that those qualities are important.

This kind of interview involves parents and other adults in students' educational activities and provides them with an opportunity to share their values and beliefs. Sometimes a parent or other adult will not want or be able to find the time to sit down and talk with a child. More often, however, students may not want to talk with a parent or other adult. These kinds of responses might warrant further discussion with the student to assess the situation.

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Sometimes adults are happy to have the opportunity to share their views with a child, but not as eager to have their opinions shared with the class. When interviews are being discussed in class, if any of the adults interviewed do not want their answers discussed, students can talk about how the adult's responses made them feel.

Lesson 3 – Friendship

Objective

In this lesson, students rate the qualities they value most in a friend and in a boyfriend or a girlfriend. In groups, they will also have the opportunity to compare their values with those of other students.

Procedure

In the first part of this assignment (p. 26), each student will rate the top five qualities they value most in a friend. When students have completed the survey, they should be assigned to groups of three or four of same-sex students. Student groups should be asked to agree on three qualities. After groups have completed the assignment, teachers should list the qualities each group named and tabulate which were most valued. (This can also be done with individual answers if time permits.)

When teachers write the answers on the board, they should list the qualities the boys came up with on one side and the qualities the girls decided upon on the other side. If there are noticeable differences, the class can discuss why they think the lists are different.

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Thinking About the Video

Directions: Answer the following questions based on "Great Expectations," the *Degrassi Junior High* episode in which Joey assumes Liz will have sex with him.

1. Joey tells his friends that Liz looks like she "does it." What makes him think that? Why is it hurtful to make assumptions?

2. Stephanie changes her clothes because she wants Simon to notice her. Would you change your appearance or behavior to get someone to like you? Why or why not? What are some other ways to get people to notice you?

3. Stephanie calls Liz a "sleaze" because of her appearance. What can you tell about a person by the way he or she dresses? Do people in your school get labeled because of the way they dress? How?

4. Spike asks Stephanie how come people who look different always have stories made up about them. How would you answer her? How do you think this makes the person who is being talked about feel?

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5. What do you think of how Joey approached Liz? How do you think it made Liz feel? What do you think he should have done differently? How do you know when someone wants sex?

6. Did Liz mislead Joey by suggesting they go to her house and telling him her mother would be out? Was she putting herself at risk? Explain.

7. When Liz kicks Joey out, she asks him why guys always think about having sex. Do you think she is right? Explain. What would you say to her?

8. At the end of the episode Joey says he "totally messed up." What could he do so that Liz might forgive him and trust him again? Should she? Explain.

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Parent/Adult Interview

Directions: Ask an adult the following questions and write down his or her responses. After the interview, complete the student questions.

1. What qualities do you look for in a friend? Why are those qualities important to you?

2. How have your ideas about friendship changed since you were in high school? Do you still have any of the same friends you had in school? If so, what made those friendships last? If not, why did the friendships end?

3. What are the biggest problems or difficulties you have with friends? How do you handle them? Did you handle problems differently when you were in high school?

4. Under what conditions do you think it is appropriate to end a friendship? Explain.

5. What qualities do you think are important for me to look for in my friends? How much say do you think you should have in my choice of friends?

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Student Questions

1. How do your ideas of friendship compare with the ideas of the adult you interviewed? Explain.

2. In what ways are your problems with friends similar to or different from the problems of the adult you interviewed? Do you both handle them the same way? Explain.

3. In what ways are the conditions that would end a friendship similar or different for you and the adult you interviewed?

4. What do you think of the adult's ideas about what you should look for in a friend? Explain why you agree or disagree.

5. What do you think should be a parent's or other adult's role in determining whom you spend time with?

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Friendship

Directions: Choose and rate the top five qualities you value most in a friend ("1" being the most important). Later you will work in groups to choose the three most important qualities.

____thoughtful, kind	____patient	____intelligent	____creative or artistic
____athletic	____popular	____trustworthy	____leadership ability
____attractive	____honest	____self-confident	____wealthy
____cheerful, happy	____fair	____loyal, supportive	____sense of humor
____sensitive	____similar interests	____good listener	____talented

1. Explain why you chose your top three.

2. What three qualities do you value most in a boyfriend or a girlfriend? Did you choose the same or different qualities? Why?

Group Assignment

1. In your groups, agree on three characteristics you think are important in a friend.

2. Agree on three characteristics you think are important in a boyfriend or a girlfriend.

Class Summary

1. What are the three characteristics the class values most in a friend?

2. What are the three characteristics the class values most in a boyfriend or a girlfriend?

3. Were there any differences in the qualities that boys and girls looked for in a friend? In a boyfriend or a girlfriend? If so, why do you think they were different?

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Readings and Resources

Readings

All Grown up and No Place to Go, by David Elkind. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1984.

Friends for Life, by Ellen Emerson White. New York: Avon Books, 1983.

Growing and Changing: A Handbook for Preteens, by Kathy McCoy and Charles Wibbelsman, M.D. New York, NY: Perigee Books, 1986.

Seduction Lines Heard 'Round the World and Answers You Can Give, by Sol Gordon. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988.

Sweet Sixteen and Never..., by Jeanne Befancourt. New York: Bantam, Starfire, 1987.

Talk Sex: Answers to Questions You Can't Ask Your Parents, by Mary V. Borhek. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1983.

The Teenage Survival Guide: Coping with Problems of Everyday Life, by Kathy McCoy. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981.

Who am I? Who Are You? Coping with Friends, Feelings, and Other Teenage Dilemmas, by Kathleen London and Frank Caparulo. Reading, MA; Addison-Wesley, 1983

Resources

Relationship Abuse Prevention Project
Marin Abused Women's Services
1717 5th Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
(415) 457-2464
(415) 924-6616 (Women's 24-hour hotline)
(415) 924-1070 (Men's 24-hour hotline)
(415) 924-3456 (Spanish language hotline)

Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
130 West 42nd Street
Suite 2500
New York, NY 10036
(212) 819-9770

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HIV/AIDS

About this Unit

This unit uses the *Degrassi High* episode "One Last Dance" as a springboard for discussion about HIV and AIDS. The components of the unit are:

- **"One Last Dance"** 30-minute video
- **Background information on HIV and AIDS**
- **About the Video**
- **Lesson 1: Discussion Guide and Worksheet**
  A question-and-answer sheet relating to the video designed to give students some idea of what it is like for a teen to live with HIV.
- **Lesson 2: Informational Handout**
  An HIV/AIDS fact sheet teachers can review with their students.
- **Lesson 3: Group Work**
  Five short scenarios about people with HIV/AIDS for groups of students to read and discuss.
- **Lesson 4: Parent/Adult Interview**
  A sheet of questions about HIV/AIDS that students can use to interview a parent or other adult.
- **Lesson 5: Quiz**
  A true/false test that measures a student's understanding of HIV/AIDS.
- **Readings and Resources**

Additional Activities

Speakers are also excellent resources for any health curriculum. Local AIDS awareness organizations often have a list of classroom speakers who can talk about HIV/AIDS facts and what it's like to live with HIV/AIDS. Some parents or relatives of your students may be involved with AIDS. They may be researchers, nurses, or work in HIV/AIDS education and outreach programs. Students often like to hear from someone they know, and parents are often willing volunteers. If speakers are invited, students should write down anonymous questions on file cards before the speaker arrives. All students should hand in a card even if it says "I have no question."

Background Information on HIV/AIDS

Many experts in adolescent health believe that HIV may be the major threat to the well-being of adolescents in the next century. As of October 1991, approximately 200,000 cases of AIDS had been diagnosed and reported in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. While the majority of cases are diagnosed in 21- to 40-year-olds, AIDS is now the seventh leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds. The average length of time from HIV infection to illness is approximately 10 years. Consequently, many people who are infected as teenagers will not begin to show symptoms until they are in their twenties. Most HIV-infected people look and feel perfectly healthy. But even people who have no symptoms can transmit the virus to others through unprotected sexual intercourse or the sharing of needles.

The most common way HIV is transmitted in teenagers is through unprotected sexual intercourse. More than one-half of all teenagers are likely to engage in sexual intercourse

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before they graduate high school, according to Planned Parenthood, and these teens are less likely to protect themselves (for example, use condoms) after they have been drinking or using drugs.

School- and community-based programs should strive to provide young people with accurate information about transmission, risk reduction, safer sex, and discrimination against people who are HIV positive. They should also try to create forums in which young people can comfortably examine and discuss their own values, opinions, and attitudes about HIV-related issues.

The emphasis in "One Last Dance" is on the psychosocial and emotional issues of HIV infection for adolescents. Helping students identify and discuss these issues will enhance an HIV-prevention message but more importantly will help HIV-negative students learn to understand and actively support their HIV-infected peers. Issues raised by the video include confusion about disclosing HIV status to friends and family, isolation and fear of ostracism, homophobia (irrational fear or hatred of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people), and discrimination against HIV-infected people.

About the Video

Synopsis

In an earlier episode, viewers find out that Dwayne, the school bully, has contracted HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Students have been spreading the rumor that someone at Degrassi has HIV, and Dwayne is afraid that Joey (the only one who knows) has revealed his secret. After hearing students talking about AIDS, Dwayne chooses to disclose that he is HIV positive and that he contracted HIV from a female sexual partner. While one student (Joanne) is informed about HIV and is sympathetic to Dwayne, another (Nick) has irrational fears and refuses to be in the same room with Dwayne. Dwayne's childhood friend Tabi has mixed reactions and tries to sort them out.

The final dance at Degrassi both brings about a possible rekindling of the romance between Caitlin and Joey and the acceptance of Dwayne by his old friend Tabi.

Degrassi Characters

- **Dwayne:** A former bully who has tested positive for HIV.
- **Joey:** A popular student who used to be picked on by Dwayne. In an earlier *Degrassi* episode, Dwayne revealed to Joey that he had HIV while the two were having a bloody fistfight in the bathroom.
- **Tabi:** Dwayne's childhood pal who at first has many irrational fears about HIV. Her friendship with Dwayne, however, helps her get the facts straight.
- **Nick:** Tabi's friend who refuses to be in the same room with Dwayne.
- **Joanne:** A student whose mother works with people with AIDS. Joanne provides accurate information about HIV to students and is supportive of Dwayne.
- **Caitlin:** Joey's former girlfriend.

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Lesson 1 – Thinking About the Video

Objective

The objective of this lesson is to help students gain insight into what it's like to live with HIV.

Procedure

After students have seen the video, this assignment (pp. 32–33) should be completed as homework so students are prepared to discuss their answers in class the following day. Because there is a lot of information about HIV that students may not know, it may be helpful if teachers distribute and review the fact sheet from Lesson 2 prior to viewing the video.

Keep in mind that while students' opinions and contributions to class discussions are valued and encouraged, teachers should correct misinformation when student comments are based on myths. While the legal system may or may not be in step with people's values (and students can research current regulations governing some of the issues raised by the assignment), teachers should encourage students to view individual rights from the perspective of both infected and non-infected people. HIV/AIDS-related issues for students to think about when doing this assignment include medical needs and costs, discrimination, the importance of support from friends and family, and the concerns of people infected with HIV.

Lesson 2 – HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet

Objective

The fact sheet is included to answer some common questions about HIV and AIDS.

Procedure

Photocopy the fact sheet (pp. 34–35) and hand one out to each student. Teachers can review the information with students by having individuals read and answer each question.

If teachers prefer not to present this information in a lecture, they might consider beginning the class by making two columns on the board. On the left the heading could be "What I already know about HIV/AIDS" and on the right "What I want to know about HIV/AIDS." Each student can be asked to contribute a comment or question for one of the columns. When the list of questions is completed for the "want to know" column, assign small groups of students to a particular question. The fact sheet can then be handed out and the group could find the information answering their question and report the facts to the class. At that time, any false information from the first column can be corrected. If questions are raised that require additional research, student groups may be asked to call one of the agencies listed at the end of the unit that has an HIV/AIDS information hot line.

Lesson 3 – Vignettes and Group Work

Objective

This lesson focuses on students' reactions to different situations involving people with HIV/AIDS and allows for deeper exploration of some of the issues raised in Lesson 1.

Procedure

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group to review a different vignette (pp. 36–37). Allow each group some time to come up with their answers. One student should be assigned to be group spokesperson. Another student should be assigned to present the opposing view. The entire group should help with the content for each side.

Be aware that each situation will bring up personal feelings and discussion about many complex issues. The second story will bring up abortion, the third (and possibly the fourth) will bring up homosexuality. After each group presents its answers to the questions, ask the other students if there are any considerations that they feel were left out. Encourage students to explore each issue from all sides.

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Lesson 4 – Parent/Adult Interview

Objective

In this interview, students compare their views about HIV/AIDS with an adult's views.

Procedure

Students will be asked to interview an adult (parent, other relative, teacher, friend) using the questions on the handout (pp. 38–39). After the interview, there are questions for students to answer.

Adults should be aware that the purpose of this kind of interview is to involve them in students' educational activities and give them an opportunity to share their beliefs. Sometimes a parent or other adult will not want or be able to find the time to sit down and talk with a child. More often, however, a student may not want to talk with a parent or other adult. These kinds of responses might warrant discussion with the student to assess the situation.

Sometimes adults are happy to have the opportunity to share their views with a child, but not as eager to have their opinions shared with the class. When interviews are being discussed in class, if any of the adults interviewed do not want their answers discussed, students can talk about how the adult's responses made them feel.

Lesson 5 – How Much Do You Know?

Objective

This lesson consists of a true/false test that measures a student's understanding of HIV/AIDS.

Procedure

This test (p. 40) can either be used at the beginning of the curriculum to gauge how much students already know about HIV/AIDS, or at the end to measure how much they have learned from other lessons. After students have completed the quiz, teachers should go over each answer and encourage students to ask questions when they are unclear about any of the information.

Test answers

1. **False.** The Red Cross uses a clean, disposable needle with each donor.
2. **True.** HIV can not be transmitted by touching or hugging.
3. **True.** Condoms significantly reduce risk of transmission.
4. **False.** Symptoms may appear from two to 18 years after infection.
5. **True.**
6. **True.** Blood to blood contact is considered high-risk behavior.
7. **True.**
8. **True.**
9. **False.** HIV is a weak virus outside the body and dies upon contact with air.
10. **False.** Symptoms may not appear for years.
11. **False.** Anyone can get AIDS. The fastest growing rate of infection right now is among heterosexual teenagers.
12. **True.**
13. **False.** A lot of students who do not fully understand the concept of AIDS transmission believe that you can 'make' HIV/AIDS by mixing people's blood together (i.e., blood brothers). You can get HIV only if the blood (or bodily fluids) of an **already-infected** person comes into contact with the blood or bodily fluids of a person who is not infected.
14. **False.** Only latex condoms reduce risk of transmission.
15. **False.** Lesbians are still at risk although the incidence is low.
16. **True.** Some people, however, develop symptoms within two years.
17. **False.** Mosquitos draw blood from only one person to fertilize eggs.
18. **False.** It can take three to six months for antibodies to be made and for them to show on a test.
19. **False.** Some students mistakenly believe they are protected by a monogamous relationship. Because HIV can live unnoticed in a person's body for a long time, a person is at risk every time he or she has unprotected sexual contact.
20. **True.** Many experts in adolescent health believe that HIV may be the major threat to the well-being of adolescents in the next century.

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Thinking About the Video

Directions: Answer the following questions based on "One Last Dance," the *Degrassi High* episode in which Dwayne tells his friends he is HIV positive.

1. Why do you think Dwayne decided to tell his friends? Do you think he made the right decision? Explain.

2. What should his friends do? What do you think you would do if a friend told you he or she was HIV positive?

3. Joey tells Dwayne he has a right to be in school. Do you think students with HIV should be allowed to attend school? Why or why not? Who should be told when a student with HIV is in school?

4. The doctor asks Dwayne if he has told his parents. Since Dwayne is under 18, should the doctor tell his parents? Do his parents have a right to know? Explain.

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5. Dwayne says when he told his parents he was HIV positive, his father was mad and his mom cried. If you were a parent, how might you respond? Should it matter how Dwayne got infected?

6. What do you think is the hardest part about finding out you are HIV positive?

7. Joanne tells Tabi that she gets so angry about how people with HIV or AIDS get treated. In what ways can you imagine people with HIV or AIDS might be discriminated against?

8. What might people in your community do to support people with HIV or AIDS?

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HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet

1. What is HIV and AIDS?

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that destroys the immune system. HIV attacks the T-cells, the building blocks to our immune system. As more T-cells are destroyed, the HIV-positive person's immune system gets weaker and weaker. When the immune system begins to break down, the HIV positive person will start to get infections that would not appear in a person with a healthy immune system. Once a person with HIV gets certain infections, he or she will be diagnosed by a doctor as having AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

Approximately 1 million people in the United States are infected with HIV, and between 9 and 11 million people are infected worldwide. According to the Centers for Disease Control, as of August 1991, there had been close to 200,000 reported cases of AIDS in the United States (including 3,000 children) and approximately 123,000 AIDS-related deaths.

2. How is HIV transmitted?

HIV is transmitted from an infected person to an uninfected person in the following ways:

- **Sex** – The virus is transmitted through blood, semen, and vaginal secretions. If a person has any kind of sex with an infected partner, there is a risk of contracting HIV. The risk can be lowered, however, by using latex condoms.
- **Blood** – You can get HIV by sharing needles that have been used by infected people to inject drugs or steroids, pierce ears, or get tattoos. You can also get HIV through contact with blood or blood products that carry the virus.
- **Birth** – An HIV-positive woman can transmit the virus to her unborn child.
- **Other** – Some researchers believe that HIV can be transmitted through kissing if both people have open cuts in the mouth or gum disease. (However, there has never been a documented case of transmission through kissing.)

Note: The virus is **not** transmitted by physical contact such as hugging or touching, through the air (sneezing or coughing), by toilet seats or doorknobs, or by mosquitos.

3. How can HIV/AIDS be prevented?

- **Education** – Find out all the facts. Talk with friends, family, teachers, or counselors about any and all aspects of HIV that concern you.
- **Sex** – The best way to protect yourself is not to have any kind of sexual intercourse. If you choose to have sex, always use a latex condom lubricated with the spermicide Nonoxynol-9.
- **Drugs** – Do not share needles to inject drugs (including steroids), pierce ears, or get tattoos. Avoid using drugs and get treatment if addicted.
- **Other** – Talk to a health-care provider or teen-clinic counselor if you think you may be infected.

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4. How does a person know whether he or she is infected?

Not all people who engage in high-risk behaviors get infected, but infection can happen anytime someone has unprotected sex or shares needles. There is a blood test that indicates whether someone is infected. The test looks for antibodies that have been made in response to HIV, the AIDS virus. Antibodies can take up to three to six months to be produced in the body. HIV testing should be done only by trained professionals. If you think you may be infected, talk to someone at a local family-planning clinic or teen-health center. A person can remain in good health for ten years or longer after being infected with the AIDS virus. An infected person who does not know that he or she carries the virus can still transmit HIV to others.

5. What happens in the later stages of the disease?

- Fever for four to five days or night sweats.
- Unexplained weight loss of 20 to 30 pounds in three months.
- Fatigue, aches, and pains for more than ten days.
- Sore and swollen lymph nodes for ten days.
- Blue or purple spots or rashes on the skin.
- Ulcerated sores for more than four or five weeks.
- Loss of motor ability or the function of any senses.
- Persistent cough and/or shortness of breath.
- Diarrhea.

6. What treatments are available for people with HIV or AIDS?

If people who test positive for the virus get early treatment, they can often remain without symptoms for extended periods of time. Right now there is no cure for HIV or AIDS. Most people will die within three years after developing AIDS. There are many experimental treatments for HIV and AIDS that are allowing people to stay alive longer. AZT, an FDA-approved drug, can slow down the destruction of the immune system. (As with other powerful medication, however, there may be side effects.)

7. Can HIV be transmitted through blood transfusions?

Since 1985, all blood used in transfusions has been tested for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. A significant number of people who had transfusions before 1985, however, received contaminated blood and developed HIV/AIDS. The current risk of receiving contaminated blood is very small due to accurate HIV-screening tests. You can **not** get HIV by donating blood.

8. Where can I get more information?

- National AIDS Hotline (toll-free): (800) 342-AIDS
  (800) 344-SIDA (Spanish language), (800) AIDS-TTY (hearing-impaired)
- Teens TAP Hotline: (800) 234-TEEN
- National AIDS Information Clearinghouse (NAIC): (800) 458-5231
  (800) 243-7889 (hearing-impaired)

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Group Work – Vignettes

Directions: Read the story assigned to your group and decide how the situation should be resolved.

Situation 1

You are the director of admissions for a prestigious medical school. You have an application from a student that was reviewed by your staff. The student was accepted into the school, although his admission letter has not been mailed. One of your employees says he knows that the student has tested positive for the HIV virus. You know that if this is true the student is not likely to be well enough either to complete his medical training or become a practicing physician for very long. Placements in the medical school are few and training is costly.

(From *Teaching AIDS*, by Marcia Quackenbush and Pamela Sargent. Santa Cruz, CA: Network Publications, 1990.*)

Would you admit the student into medical school? Explain your answer and your reasons.

Situation 2

You are a counselor at a social-service agency. A woman comes in to meet with you. She has a history of intravenous drug use, but has not used drugs for two years. She has been ill recently and as she describes her symptoms, you begin to suspect that she may have been exposed to HIV. She tells you she now has a job, is married, and is trying to get pregnant. She and her husband are excited about starting a family together.

(From *Teaching AIDS*, by Marcia Quackenbush and Pamela Sargent. Santa Cruz, CA: Network Publications, 1990.*)

How would you counsel her? What would you do if she refuses to tell her husband? Should she go ahead and get pregnant? Explain.

Situation 3

A very popular high school English teacher has taken a few weeks leave of absence to recover from a bout of pneumonia. The students are anxious for him to return since he is an excellent teacher and is also the adviser to the yearbook staff and senior class. After he recovers, the news spreads around school that he got sick because he has AIDS. It is also known by some people that he is gay. The principal and other teachers know about his situation and are very supportive. However, when many of the parents and students find out, there are some who are calling for the teacher to resign.

(From *Learn and Live: A Teaching Guide on AIDS Prevention*, Mass. Department of Public Health and Mass. Department of Education)

What do you think should happen? What would you do if you were the principal? As a student which side would you be on? Explain.

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Situation 4

Sarah's father has died of AIDS. She hasn't told anyone except a few close friends. People at school have been supportive since it was a terrible loss for her family. In the obituary, her family wrote that he died after a long illness without mentioning AIDS. However, people have been asking questions about his death and a newspaper reporter who knew Sarah's father wants to print the whole story. The reporter feels that people should be more aware of how many people are affected by the AIDS epidemic. Sarah is afraid of how people will treat her if the news is made public.

What do you think should happen? If the news is printed, how might people react? Should it matter how Sarah's father got AIDS? Explain.

Situation 5

A female surgeon with three young children has a patient who needs a minor operation that might extend his life. The patient is a brilliant medical researcher who is working on treatments for cancer. The surgeon is the only one on call when the patient is admitted to the hospital, but when she finds out he has AIDS, she does not want to perform the operation. Even using proper medical precautions, she feels the risk of transmission is too great. She supports her family and is concerned about her children. The patient has contacted a lawyer who is threatening to sue the doctor if she refuses to operate.

What do you think should happen? What rights does the patient have? What rights does the doctor have? What would you do if you were the doctor? What would you do if you were the patient?

Situation 6

Earvin (Magic) Johnson, one of the greatest basketball players of all time, announced that he tested positive for HIV. Because he is such a well-loved and admired sports figure, Magic Johnson has had contracts with many companies to endorse products. Although he doesn't have AIDS and is still physically healthy, Magic has decided to retire from basketball and become active in HIV/AIDS education.

What would you think about a company that ended its contract with Magic Johnson because he is infected with HIV? If you were the president of a company that had a contract with him, what reasons would you consider for keeping him or dropping him? What would you do and why?

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Adult Interview

Directions: Ask an adult the following questions and write down his or her responses. After the interview, complete the student questions.

1. Do you believe health-care workers should have to take an HIV test and inform their patients if the test is positive? Why or why not? Should patients have to tell their doctors, dentists, and other health-care workers if they are HIV positive?

2. If someone tests positive for HIV, should they tell anyone? If so, who (friends, parents, teachers, doctors, employer, co-workers)? If not, why? Explain your reasons.

3. Do you believe a health professional (doctor, nurse, dentist) can refuse to care for a patient who is HIV positive? Why or why not?

4. Some schools are establishing health clinics that will give out condoms to students to prevent pregnancy and the spread of HIV. How do you feel about this kind of program?

5. What do you think can be done to reduce or prevent the spread of AIDS?

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Student Questions

1. In what areas do you and the adult agree?

2. In what areas do you and the adult disagree?

3. Did any of the adult's answers surprise you? Explain.

4. Did you change your mind about any particular issue after hearing an adult's views? Explain.

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How Much Do You Know?

Directions: Mark each statement true or false.

____ **1.** Donating blood can put you at risk for contracting HIV.

____ **2.** Hugging or touching someone with HIV/AIDS is safe.

____ **3.** If condoms are used properly they can prevent semen or vaginal fluids from entering another person's body and reduce the risk of transmitting HIV.

____ **4.** Once the AIDS virus enters the body, symptoms of the illness will appear within one month.

____ **5.** People who have AIDS die primarily because their immune systems are too weak to fight off infections.

____ **6.** You can get the AIDS virus by allowing an open wound or sore to come in contact with the blood of an infected person.

____ **7.** Since 1985, blood used for transfusions has been screened for HIV.

____ **8.** AIDS is fatal and there is currently no cure.

____ **9.** The AIDS virus may be transmitted through air (sneezing or coughing), food, or water.

____ **10.** You can tell if you've been infected with the AIDS virus.

____ **11.** Only drug users and homosexual men are at risk for HIV/AIDS.

____ **12.** If HIV is detected early, medical treatments may help keep a person healthy for a longer period of time.

____ **13.** If blood, semen, or vaginal secretions from an uninfected person gets into the blood stream of another uninfected person, then they both can get HIV/AIDS.

____ **14.** Birth-control pills protect women from HIV infection.

____ **15.** Lesbians can not get HIV/AIDS from woman-to-woman sexual contact.

____ **16.** It can take as long as 15 years for symptoms to develop after a person is infected with the AIDS virus.

____ **17.** Mosquitos can transmit the AIDS virus.

____ **18.** A blood test taken a few days after infection will indicate if a person is HIV positive.

____ **19.** You can't get HIV/AIDS if you have sex with only one other person.

____ **20.** Public health officials consider teenagers a group at high risk of contracting HIV.

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Readings and Resources

Readings for Teachers

AIDS, Learn and Live: A Teaching Guide on AIDS Prevention
Department of Public Health AIDS Office
(617) 727-0368 or Department of Education Student Services (617) 770-7580

Lynda Madaras Talks to Teens About AIDS: An Essential Guide for Parents, Teachers, and Young People, by Lynda Madaras. New York: New Market Press, 1988.

Teaching AIDS: A Resource Guide on Acquired Immune Deficiency
Order from Syndrome Network Publications, 1700 Mission Street, P.O. Box 1830, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, (408) 438-4060.

Readings for Students

AIDS: Trading Fears for Facts: A Guide for Teens, by Karen Hein, Theresa Foy Digeronimo, and the editors of Consumer Reports Books. Mount Vernon, NY: Consumers Union, 1989.

Night Kites, fiction by M. E. Kerr. New York: Harper & Row, 1986.

Risky Times: How to Be AIDS-Free and Stay Healthy, by Jeanne Blake. New York: Workman Publishing, 1990.

Understanding and Preventing AIDS: A Guide for Young People, by Warren Coleman. Chicago: Children's Press, 1987.

When Someone You Know Has AIDS, by Leonard J. Martelli, Fran D. Pelz, and William Messina. New York: Crown Publishers, 1987.

Hotlines and Resources

AIDS Action Council
2033 M Street NW
Suite 801
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 293-2886

National AIDS Hotline: (800) 342-AIDS
(800) 344-SIDA (Spanish language); (800) AIDS-TTY (hearing-impaired)
Open 24 hours. All calls are free and confidential. The hotline can answer questions and refer you to local support groups, counseling and testing centers, and hotlines.

National Association of State Boards of Education
1012 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-4000
NASBE has developed a guide to setting polices for students and staff who are infected with HIV entitled "Someone at School has AIDS."

National STD Hotline
(800) 227-8922 (Mon.–Fri., 8 a.m. –11 p.m.)

Teens TAP hotline: (800) 234-TEEN
Phones are staffed by teenagers and are open from 4 p.m.–8 p.m. central standard time. All calls are free and confidential.

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Date Abuse

About this Unit

This unit uses the *Degrassi High* episode "Nobody's Perfect" as a springboard for discussion about relationships, abuse, and gender roles. The components of this unit are:

- **"Nobody's Perfect"** 30-minute video
- **Background Information on Date Abuse**
- **About the Video**
- **Lesson 1: Discussion Guide and Worksheet**
  A question-and-answer sheet relating to the video for students to complete as homework. The completed worksheets are then used to spark discussion about issues brought up by the video.
- **Lesson 2: Parent/Adult Interview**
  An interview to give students the opportunity to discuss relationships and gender roles with an adult.
- **Lesson 3: Group Work**
  An assignment to help students critically examine gender roles.
- **Readings and Resources**

Additional Activities

As part of this unit, students might also research the incidence and causes of rape, domestic violence, child abuse, and incest (and find out about the services that exist for the survivors of these abuses). Discussion about gender roles that encourage certain behaviors or attitudes is also important.

The additional curricula listed in the resource section include value surveys for students to complete about certain behaviors (such as affection, spanking, bullying). Other surveys explore attitudes about sexual force as related to appearance, alcohol use, previous behaviors, money spent on a date, and the amount of kissing and touching that occurs on a date. These are interesting topics for debate as well. (For example, is a woman "asking for it" if she dresses seductively?) To explore rape further in terms of its stigma, punishment, "blaming the victim" syndrome, and presentation in the media, students might look into the William Kennedy Smith rape case, the rape at Big Dan's Tavern in New Bedford upon which the movie *The Accused* is based, and the Clarence Thomas Supreme Court confirmation hearings that focused on Anita Hill's testimony about sexual harassment.

Background Information on Date Abuse

Abuse is broadly defined as any behavior that prevents another person from achieving his or her full potential. Abuse can be physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual. It is estimated that one-third of all women under the age of 20 are victims of "date abuse" – physical and emotional abuse by their boyfriends. Unless a young man or woman learns to recognize the signs of an abusive relationship early on, he or she may become trapped in a cycle of abuse.

Young men and women involved in date abuse often have low self-esteem. Teenage girls in particular often allow themselves to be manipulated because in many cases they lack a sense of their own power and strength. Because many victims of date abuse fall prey to other abusive

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people (such as an alcoholic parent), they sometimes come to expect abusive behavior from loved ones and become tolerant of abuse. Many abusers themselves are also exposed to abuse. For example, a boy whose father beats his mother learns that such behavior is acceptable.

How can teens empower themselves to break the cycle of abuse? First, they should find an advocate – a parent, friend, teacher, counselor, or anyone they can trust – who will help them find ways to keep safe. Learning to trust someone who is not abusive is important. Second, they need to set parameters and to know when someone is "invading their space." Identifying physical and psychological boundaries can provide strength and safety.

Why doesn't a girl just break up with her boyfriend or report the abuse? Often the victim fears that being found out will be the cause for more abuse. Or she believes such treatment is justified, reflecting a poor self-image and low self-esteem. Or she fears that disclosure will mean the loss of an intimate relationship. She may also feel guilty, because the abuser often expresses his need for her.

Individuals who suspect abuse must decide for themselves whether to take action on the victim's behalf. Many local support groups, including social-service agencies, hotlines, and self-help groups, can be helpful for both victims and witnesses of abuse. A list of such resources is included at the end of this unit.

About the Video

Synopsis

Kathleen's new boyfriend Scott is physically and emotionally abusing her. He is jealous when Kathleen talks to or does schoolwork with other boys. He also discourages her from pursuing her dream of acting when she does not get a part in the school play. He apologizes for being abusive to her with gifts and sweet talk. Kathleen somehow feels she deserves the abuse and that Scott loves and needs her. Her friend Melanie tries to intervene when she witnesses Scott hitting Kathleen. Her other friend Diana thinks it's great that Kathleen has a boyfriend.

A subplot involves Spike's hesitancy to accept a date with Patrick. Her friend Liz reminds her that boys may think Spike will be "easy" because she has a baby daughter. Another subplot examines Joey and Caitlin's relationship and Caitlin's desire to remain friends even though she and Joey are no longer dating.

Degrassi Characters

- **Kathleen:** A bright student who has difficulty in social situations. In other episodes, viewers become aware of her bout with anorexia and her mother's drinking problem.
- **Scott:** The abusive boyfriend. Viewers may surmise that Scott has a difficult family situation after he alludes to his father's temper.
- **Melanie:** Kathleen's friend who confronts her about Scott's behavior.
- **Diana:** Kathleen's friend who thinks Melanie is jealous that Kathleen has a boyfriend.
- **Spike:** Teenage mother trying to balance motherhood and school and catch up on some of the "normal" teenage activities she feels she has missed.
- **Liz:** Spike's best friend.
- **Patrick:** A new student at Degrassi from Ireland.
- **Joey:** Caitlin's ex-boyfriend.
- **Caitlin:** A bright, caring student.

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Lesson 1 – Thinking About the Video

Objective

The primary objective of this lesson is to help students learn how to identify abusive behavior.

Procedure

Photocopy the accompanying handout (pp. 46–47). After viewing the video in class, distribute the worksheet to students to be completed as homework, so that students are prepared to discuss their answers in class the following day. Many issues are likely to be raised about how to handle anger, whether hitting is ever appropriate, whether a friend should interfere, and, if so, what role he or she should take.

Many students may find it easier to understand Scott's inability to control his temper than Kathleen's willingness to tolerate his abuse. His behavior may be the result of poor parental models, the belief that men have the right to be dominant in a relationship, and feelings of insecurity about himself and the relationship. Students need to understand that Kathleen may also have poor role models (her mother is an alcoholic) and suffer from low self-esteem. It should be emphasized, however, that although there are reasons for abusive relationships, people involved in them are capable of changing their behavior.

Discuss with the class why so many women stay in abusive relationships. The idea that something (a boyfriend, marriage) is better than nothing needs to be examined. Why people become abusive is another important topic for discussion.

Students can also explore how anger is handled in our culture. Have them list how men and women express anger on television and in the movies. Discuss other, more positive ways to handle anger. Consider leading skill-building exercises around assertiveness, conflict resolution, and effective communication.

If students enjoy role-playing, they could continue the conversation between Scott and Kathleen. Groups could act out different possible outcomes (Kathleen breaks up with Scott, Kathleen forgives him, Scott is willing to get help, Scott continues to bully Kathleen), and students could assess the long- and short-term consequences of each decision.

All students should receive a resource list of community groups that deal with some of the issues discussed. A possible group project is for students to develop such a list for the class.

Lesson 2 – Parent/Adult Interview

Objective

This exercise provides an opportunity for an adult to share with a student his or her thoughts about relationships and gender roles. Also included in the lesson are questions for students to help them clarify their own thinking after listening to an adult's views.

Procedure

Before class, photocopy the accompanying handout (pp. 48–49). Distribute it to students and ask them to interview an adult (parent, other relative, teacher, friend) before the next class. After the interview, there are questions for the student to answer.

Sometimes a parent or other adult will not want or be able to find the time to sit down and talk with a child. More often, however, a student may not want to talk with a parent or other adult. These kinds of responses might warrant further discussion with the student to assess the situation.

Some adults may be happy to have the opportunity to discuss their views with a child, but not as eager to have their opinions shared with the class. When interviews are being discussed in class, if any of the adults interviewed do not want their answers discussed, students can focus on how the adult's responses made them feel.

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It will be interesting for many students to hear an adult's thoughts about healthy relationships as well as their views on how much adult intervention in a child's relationship is beneficial. Some older students might believe it is futile for a parent to intervene in a relationship. If that is the consensus among the students, teachers can ask them who they believe should help when a relationship is clearly destructive. Many students may respond that people have to learn on their own. Teachers should remind students that people in violent or unhealthy relationships often need outside support to end a relationship.

Lesson 3 – Male/Female Roles

Objective

The objective of this lesson is to help students critically examine gender roles and their effect on relationships.

Procedure

Before class, photocopy the accompanying handout (p. 50). In groups of three or four, have students come up with a list of what they believe to be the expectations and/or advantages for each sex. Afterwards, they should answer the questions provided individually.

When the worksheets are complete, teachers should make a master list on the board of expectations and advantages for men and expectations and advantages for women. Students should each contribute a response from their group. After making these lists, discuss the questions students answered individually.

Sample Answers

- **Expectations/Advantages for Males:** interested in sports and cars, tough, don't show emotions, career oriented, assertive/aggressive, financial success
- **Expectations/Advantages for Females:** physical appearance important, take care of family, don't get into trouble, cook, clean, more friendships

Students should try to assess whether or not they believe it is fair to expect things of people based on their sex. When they examine what they believe to be misconceptions about men and women, they may begin to understand how difficult it can be to live with unrealistic expectations and societal pressures. Teachers can also question whether or not students believe one of the sexes has it easier in society than the other.

A discussion about how gender roles are changing and how students as individuals might contribute to change is also important. Many students hope for equality with respect to career, salaries, and domestic chores. It might also be helpful to examine the areas in which government intervention might speed up the process toward equality (such as day-care and family-leave policies).

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Thinking About the Video

Directions: Answer the following questions based on the *Degrassi Junior High* episode "Nobody's Perfect," in which Kathleen is involved with Scott, an abusive boyfriend.

1. What do you think causes Scott to be abusive? What do you think Scott can do to change his behavior?

2. Is there ever a situation in which it would be acceptable for a boyfriend or girlfriend to hit or verbally assault the other? Explain. What are other ways to deal with anger?

3. Why was it hurtful to Kathleen when Scott told her he thought she couldn't act? What could Kathleen have said in response? How do you know whether or not to trust a friend's opinion?

4. In Scott's defense, Melanie says, "Nobody's Perfect." How do you decide when the problems in a relationship are too many?

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5. Kathleen tells her friends that she can change Scott. Do you think she can? What do you think would make him change?

6. Why do you think Kathleen feels she deserves to be hit? How could someone in Kathleen's situation get help?

7. Melanie tries to tell Kathleen that no one deserves to be hurt. What would you do if you knew a friend was being abused? Where could you go for help?

8. Do you think Kathleen will forgive Scott and get back together with him? Why or why not? Should she? Explain.

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Parent/Adult Interview

Directions: Ask an adult the following five questions and write down his or her responses. After the interview complete the questions for students.

1. What characteristics do you value in a relationship?

2. What kinds of behaviors do you believe are destructive in a relationship?

3. Under what conditions would you take more direct steps to intervene in a relationship I or another young person you knew was involved in? What would you do?

4. Are there certain roles that men and women are expected to play in a relationship? What are they?

5. What do you think are the expectations and/or advantages for men in our society? What do you think are the expectations and/or advantages for women? How would you like to see roles change in the future?

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Student Questions

1. How do you feel about the adult's responses to the questions?

2. Do you agree with what the adult sees as his or her role in a young person's relationship?

3. Do you and the adult agree about the expectations and advantages for males and females in our society? Explain.

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Male/Female Roles

Directions: In your groups, try to come up with at least ten expectations and/or advantages for men and ten expectations and/or advantages for women in our society. (Think about career, interests, activities, appearance, family obligations, and personality traits. These don't necessarily have to be true for everyone, but based on your experiences as well as on images portrayed in television, movies, and magazines.)

Advantages/Expectations for Men **Advantages/Expectations for Women**

Answer the following questions individually.

1. What do you think is the most common misconception about men? Explain.

2. What do you think is the most common misconception about women? Explain.

3. What effect do expectations for men and expectations for women have on a relationship?

4. How would you like to see roles change in the future?

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Readings and Resources

Readings

I Never Called It Rape: The Ms. Report on Recognizing, Fighting, and Surviving Date and Acquaintance Rape. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

It Will Never Happen to Me! by Claudia Black. New York: Ballantine Books, 1987.

No Is Not Enough: Helping Teenagers Avoid Sexual Assault, by Caren Adams, et al. San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers, 1984.

Resources

Dating Violence Intervention Project
P.O. Box 530
Harvard Square Station
Cambridge, MA 02238
(617) 868-8328

Project on the Status and Education of Women
Association of American Colleges
1818 R Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 387- 1300
Distributes "In Case of Sexual Harassment: A Guide for Women Students" for $2.

Relationship Abuse Prevention Project
Marin Abused Women's Services
1717 5th Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
(415) 457-2464
(415) 924-6616 (Women's 24-hour hotline)
(415) 924-1070 (Men's 24-hour hotline)
(415) 924-3456 (Spanish language hotline)

Additional Curricula for Teachers

There are several excellent curricula teachers can use to supplement these lessons. The following are among the best:

No Easy Answers: A Sexual Abuse Prevention Curriculum for Junior and Senior High School Students, by Cordelia Kent. Available from Illusion Theatre, 304 North Washington, Minneapolis, MN 55401, (612) 339-4944.

Preventing Sexual Abuse: Activities and Strategies for Those Working with Children and Adolescents, by Carol A. Plummer for grades K-12. Available from Learning Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 1326, Holmes Beach, Fl 33509.

This Is It: Teen Acquaintance Rape, Information and Prevention Activities for Groups. Available from Alternatives to Fear, 101 Nickerson, Suite 150, Seattle, WA 98109, (206) 282-0177. (This organization publishes many other helpful booklets and pamphlets for teachers, students, and parents.)

The Franklin School in Newton, Mass., has initiated a program to teach young students personal-safety skills called the Child Abuse Prevention Project (CAPP). For more information, contact the principal, Dr. Granville Harris, at (617) 552-7389.

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Sexual Orientation

About this Unit

This unit uses the *Degrassi Junior High* episode "He Ain't Heavy" as a springboard for discussion about sexual orientation. The main goals of the unit are to help support gay and lesbian youth and help heterosexuals understand what it's like to be gay in this society. The components of this unit are:

- **"He Ain't Heavy"** 30-minute video
- **Background Information on Homosexuality**
- **About the Video**
- **Lesson 1: Discussion Guide and Worksheet**
  A question-and-answer sheet relating to the video for students to complete as homework. The completed worksheets are then used to spark discussion about issues raised by the video.
- **Lesson 2: Parent/Adult Interview**
  An adult interview that encourages discussion about homosexuality between a student and an adult.
- **Lesson 3: Group Work**
  A group assignment designed to help students explore their attitudes about homosexuality.
- **Readings and Resources**

Additional Activities

As part of this unit, students might also research gay and lesbian people who have made contributions to history, the arts, music, sports and science. They might also research the history of the civil rights law enacted in February 1990 that prevents discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations (restaurants, hotels, bars, transportation) based on sexual orientation. There is an effort under way to repeal this law, and students could examine the issue from both sides.

There are youth organizations throughout the United States, such as the Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth in Massachusetts, that can provide speakers who will visit your class to discuss homosexuality and answer questions. If a speaker does come to your class, smaller groups are more conducive to discussion, and students should prepare questions in advance.

Background Information on Homosexuality

Most experts estimate that one in ten people is lesbian or gay. If bisexual behavior is included, the incidence may be higher. These statistics imply that at least one or two students in your class may be homosexual. Gay and lesbian students will be greatly relieved to learn they are not alone and that there are organizations where they can receive support. A list of readings and resources is included at the end of this unit and should be photocopied and given to all your students.

Homosexuality has existed since ancient times as evidenced in prehistoric pictographs and hieroglyphs. There are many theories about the role of genetics, family dynamics, and society in

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determining sexual preference, but any lengthy discussion of causes will not be as helpful as discussions about the significance of being gay or lesbian in our society.

Many students are confused about their sexuality during their teen years. Some may have had same-sex experiences (which are quite common) and are wondering if that means they are gay or lesbian. Teens often feel attracted to a person of the same sex and wonder if that will define their sexual orientation. Many wonder what makes a person become homosexual and how much control they have in deciding their sexual preference.

The most difficult issue faced by young people who are gay or lesbian is peer and familial acceptance. If adults and peers respond in a hostile and unaccepting way, it is harder for the teen to maintain a positive self-image. Gay and lesbian youths are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual teenagers, according to a 1990 report released by the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

The American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association no longer consider homosexuality an illness. Freud is noted for saying that the most effective "treatment" for homosexuals was helping them accept and find happiness within their sexual orientation.

Since there is so much discrimination in our society toward gays and lesbians, students are often reluctant to discuss and/or disclose homosexuality. It is therefore important for teachers to present accurate, objective information and to acknowledge differing views about the subject. It is also important to have parental and administrative support for the discussion of this topic.

About the Video

Synopsis

When Degrassi students do a classroom exercise that demonstrates how quickly AIDS can spread, Snake is the student randomly assigned to be the initial carrier of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. After class, his buddies kid him about being gay, and they all behave in an effeminate manner, mocking gay men.

While Snake and his friends are playing basketball after school, Snake's older brother Glenn shows up unexpectedly from medical school. Glenn drives Snake home and tells his brother he has come home to tell the family he is gay. Snake is initially uncomfortable about the news and doesn't understand why his brother had to tell him. When Glenn's parents are told, they reject him.

A subplot focuses on Joey's determination to have the program director at a local radio station listen to his band's demo tape. Another story deals with Arthur's embarrassment about his newly acquired wealth. (His mother recently won the lottery and other classmates keep asking him if he is rich.)

Degrassi Characters

- **Snake:** A nice guy who plays in a band with Joey and Wheels. In this episode, Snake is working on his basketball skills.
- **Glenn:** Snake's older brother, a medical student.
- **Shane, B.L.T.,** and **Luke:** Snake's friends and basketball partners.
- **Joey:** A popular guy who in this episode is determined to get airplay for his band.
- **Arthur:** A kid whose mother recently won the lottery.
- **Dorothy** (Arthur's cousin) and **Bartholemew:** Kids who want to know if Arthur is rich.

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Lesson 1 – Thinking About the Video

Objective

The objective of this lesson is to help students examine how homosexuals are treated in society and help them become more sensitive to some of the difficulties homosexuals face.

Procedure

Photocopy the handout (pp. 56–57) and distribute it to students after showing the video. The assignment should be completed as homework so that students are prepared to discuss their answers in class for the following day.

There will no doubt be questions about the cause of homosexuality. Students should understand that no clear determining factor for homosexuality or heterosexuality has been established.

Because peer and familial acceptance is one of the most difficult issues faced by gays and lesbians, it is important to keep the discussion centered on Snake and his family's response. Parental expectations and what children "owe" their parents or guardians are topics students might wish to explore further in this lesson.

Students may have different levels of homophobia (irrational fear of homosexuals or homosexuality) depending on their maturity, age, and upbringing. It is important that ground rules for discussion be reviewed and that the teacher maintains a positive, supportive environment in the classroom. Here are some ground rules for teachers to consider.

- No name-calling or putdowns.
- Only one person speaks at a time.
- Confidentiality – what's said in the room stays in the room.
- No personal questions.
- No use of actual names when describing real situations.

Lesson 2 – Parent/Adult Interview

Objective

This exercise (pp. 58–59) provides an opportunity for a parent or other adult to share with a student his or her feelings and thoughts about homosexuality. Also included in the lesson are questions for students to help them clarify their own thinking after listening to an adult's views.

Procedure

Students should be offered the alternative of interviewing any adult (parent, other relative, teacher, friend, or over-18 sibling). Because the issue of homosexuality is so controversial, there might be adults who feel this should not be discussed in school or don't want to talk to their children about the topic. Because some students might also have difficulty discussing the subject, all should be encouraged to choose an adult with whom they feel comfortable talking.

Sometimes adults are happy to have the opportunity to discuss their views with a child, but not as eager to have their opinions shared with the class. When interviews are being discussed in class, if any of the adults interviewed do not want their answers discussed, students can focus on how the adult's responses made them feel.

The last student question is clearly the most personal, and students do not need to reveal their answers. Teachers can make two lists on the board: how people might feel if they can tell their family about their homosexuality and how people might feel if they can't tell their family. Students should be asked to suggest different answers. Through this exercise, it will become clear how painful it is to be rejected by family on the basis of sexual orientation.

It is important to note that gay or lesbian students who realize for the first time the impossibility of discussing their homosexuality with a parent are going to feel extremely disappointed and rejected. Teachers should make sure that students receive the resource list at

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the end of the lesson and that all students are reminded how important it is to talk to someone who understands the complexities of being gay.

Lesson 3 – Attitudes About Homosexuality

Objective

In this group assignment (p. 60) students will examine their own beliefs about homosexuality and discuss them with their classmates. The lesson also provides an opportunity to learn about and discuss ways in which gay and lesbian people are discriminated against in the United States.

Procedure

Divide the class into six groups and assign each group one of the questions. If groups seem too large, you can further divide them and assign two groups the same question. Allow the groups sufficient time to determine answers that satisfy the entire group. One student should be assigned the role of spokesperson. Another student in the group should represent the opposing view. The entire group should help prepare the arguments for both sides.

After each group presents to the class, ask the other students if there are any considerations they feel were left out. Encourage students to explore all sides of the issues.

There are many issues touched upon in this group assignment that students might discuss, debate, and research. These include whether people should be barred from certain professions because of their sexual preference (1,400 people are dismissed annually from the military because they are gay or lesbian), the practice of excluding gay and lesbian people from becoming foster parents, and "outing" (disclosing the sexual preference of public figures against their wishes), a practice some people believe will quicken public acceptance and equality for gays and lesbians.

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Thinking About the Video

Directions: Answer these questions based on "He Ain't Heavy," the *Degrassi Junior High* episode in which Snake's brother tells his family he is gay.

1. Snake speaks highly of his brother until he finds out he is gay. How does that information change his feelings? Should it? Explain.

2. Snake asks his brother why he had to tell him. Why do you think Glenn told his family? Should he have told Snake? His parents? Explain your answer.

3. Do you think Snake should tell his friends about Glenn? Explain. How do you think they will respond?

4. According to Glenn, his parents have disowned him. How do you think Glenn feels about their response?

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5. Why do you think Glenn's parents reacted the way they did? How should they react? Explain.

6. Glenn's parents probably expected him to get married and have children. Do you think this is why they are disappointed he is gay? Why do they assume he will never have children? Whose expectations should a child have to live up to?

7. How might this news affect Snake's relationship with his parents? How do you think he feels about his parents' attitude? How would you feel if you were Snake?

8. What are some of the difficulties Glenn might encounter as a gay man? What are some of the positive things he may encounter?

9. There are places where Glenn could go to talk with someone about his homosexuality and his family's response. Who would you suggest he talk with? (Try to find the names and phone numbers of helpful organizations for him listed in the phonebook or another resource.)

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Adult Interview

Directions: Ask an adult the following questions and write down his or her responses. (If an adult is uncomfortable with any question, it need not be answered.) After the interview, complete the questions for students.

1. There is a controversial issue in the gay movement right now called "outing." This involves making the sexual preference of prominent people (such as politicians, businesspeople, actors, athletes, or celebrities) known without their consent. What do you think about this practice? Explain.

2. Do you think there are any jobs where sexual orientation would make the person inappropriate for the position? (For example, Pentagon policy excludes homosexuals from military service. How do you feel about such a policy?)

3. In many states, gays and lesbians are not allowed to become foster parents. What do you think of that policy? Explain.

4. How would you feel if someone in our family (sibling, cousin, aunt, uncle) told you he or she were gay? Explain how you would react and why.

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Student Questions

1. In which areas do you and the adult agree?

2. In which areas do you and the adult disagree?

3. Did any of the adult's answers surprise you? Explain.

4. Did you change your mind about any of the issues after hearing an adult's opinions? Explain.

5. How do you feel about the adult's response to the last question? How do you think gays and lesbians feel if they can't tell their families about their sexual orientation?

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Attitudes About Homosexuality

Directions: The class will be divided into groups and each group assigned an issue to discuss and debate. Each group will present its views to the class.

1. It is currently Pentagon policy to exclude gays and lesbians from military service or dismiss them when their homosexuality is discovered. How do you feel about such a policy?

2. There is a controversial issue in the gay movement called "outing," which involves making the sexual orientation of prominent politicians, business people, actors, athletes, or celebrities known without their consent (usually by billboards or disclosure to the media). How do you feel about this practice? What do you think are the reasons for this activity? What are the objections?

3. In many states, gays and lesbians are not allowed to become foster parents. What do you think of that policy? Explain.

4. Are there any jobs where sexual orientation would make the person inappropriate for the position? Explain. What would your reaction be if a well-liked, extremely competent teacher were gay?

5. How is discrimination against homosexuals similar to or different from discrimination against other groups (such as blacks, Asians, women, religious groups)? Explain.

6. How would you feel if a close friend told you he or she were gay? How could you support him or her?

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Readings and Resources

Readings

A Different Drummer: Homosexuality in America, by Elaine Landau. New York: Messner, 1986.

All-American Boys, by Frank Mosca. Boston: Alyson, 1983.

Annie on My Mind, by Nancy Garden. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982.

Coming out to Parents, by Mary V. Borhek. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1983.

Love and Sex and Growing Up, by Eric Johnson. New York: Bantam Books, 1990. (for grades 4–8)

Love and Sex in Plain Language, by Eric Johnson. New York: Bantam Books, 1988. (for grades 8–12)

One Teenager in Ten: Writings by Gay and Lesbian Youth, edited by Ann Heron. Boston: Alyson, 1983.

Reflections of a Rock Lobster, by Aaron Fricke. An autobiographical account of a boy who took his boyfriend to the prom. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1981.

Seduction Lines Heard 'Round the World and Answers You Can Give, by Sol Gordon. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988.

Talk Sex: Answers to Questions You Can't Ask Your Parents, by Sue Johanson. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.

What Teenagers Want to Know About Sex: Questions and Answers, a publication of the Boston Children's Hospital with Dr. Robert P. Masland Jr. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co.

You Would If You Loved Me, by Sol Gordon. New York: Bantam, 1978.

Resources

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
1734 14th Street NW
Washington DC 20009
(202) 332-6483

Renaissance House
P.O. Box 292
Village Station
New York, NY 10014
(212) 674-0120
Publishes *The Gay Yellow Pages,* listings of resources throughout the nation.

Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
130 West 42nd Street
Suite 2500
New York, NY 10036
(212) 819-9770

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Teen Pregnancy

About this Unit

This unit uses the *Degrassi Junior High* episode "It's Late" as a springboard for discussion about teen sexuality, pregnancy, and parenting responsibilities. The components of this lesson are:

- **"It's Late"** 30-minute video
- **Background Information on Teen Pregnancy**
- **About the Video**
- **Lesson 1: Discussion Guide and Worksheet**
  A question-and-answer sheet relating to the video for students to complete as homework. The completed worksheets are then used to spark discussion about the video.
- **Lesson 2: Parent/Adult Interview**
  An interview that helps facilitate discussion between adults and students about parenting.
- **Lesson 3: Group Work**
  An activity to help students explore the decision to become sexually active.
- **Lesson 4: Supplemental Activity**
  An activity in which students examine what current popular songs say about love, sex, and relationships.
- **Readings and Resources**

Additional Activities

Teachers could follow up these activities with a unit on sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS. (A unit about HIV/AIDS is included in this curriculum.)

Many high school health-education classes try to simulate the child-care experience by having students responsible for a "baby" for one week. The baby is either a five-pound bag of flour, a raw egg, or other substitute. The baby is named and the responsible student must have it in view at all times (at school and at home). If the student wants to go out, a "baby sitter" must be found. Students should keep journals and write down their thoughts and feelings throughout the week.

Background Information on Teen Pregnancy

An estimated one million U.S. teens become pregnant each year, according to Planned Parenthood. While approximately 400,000 choose abortion each year, more than 500,000 decide to give birth. Of those who give birth, nine out of ten keep their babies.

Studies show that nearly six out of ten sexually active teens do not use any form of birth control. While some studies indicate misinformation as the primary cause of unintended pregnancy, others point to issues ranging from the belief that they won't get pregnant ("it won't happen to me") to the desire to have a baby.

Although teens want detailed, accurate information about sex, few parents and schools actually provide them with that information. Recent surveys show that only one-third of U.S. secondary schools offer any form of sex education and only 39 percent of such courses discuss contraception. Most parents shy away from discussing birth control with their children because they fear that discussing it means they are condoning their kids' sexual activity. In response to

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this lack of information from reliable sources, it is not surprising that teens turn to their peers to fill in the gaps. Unfortunately, the information provided by peers tends to reinforce the sexual myths and misconceptions that lead to unintended teenage pregnancies.

Researchers agree that to reduce unwanted teen pregnancies, preventive education is crucial. While information about effective birth-control methods is critical, programs and lessons that foster self-esteem, increase decision-making skills, and give students effective ways to cope with peer pressure will equip students with the tools they need to stand by their decisions and develop a healthy sense of sexuality.

About the Video

Synopsis

Lucy is having a party at her house while her parents are away. Spike (so named because of her hairstyle) and her boyfriend Shane lock themselves in a bedroom. Later, Spike reveals to two friends that her period is late. After her friends try to reassure her with misinformation, Spike questions her mom for accurate information. During this period of uncertainty, Spike has ambivalent and angry feelings toward Shane who at first tries to avoid responsibility, but later is more supportive.

With the encouragement of her two friends Heather and Erica, Spike buys a home pregnancy test. When her mother finds out that Spike may be pregnant, she does her best to support Spike (she had Spike as an unwed 15-year-old) and takes her to a doctor. Spike's pregnancy test is positive and the program ends as she contemplates her choices with Shane.

In a subplot, Yick wants to ask Melanie to go out with him, but is unsure how to go about it.

Degrassi Characters

- **Spike (Christine):** A popular and well-liked student.
- **Heather** and **Erica:** Identical twins who are good friends with Spike.
- **Joey:** A popular kid and class clown who plays in a band with Wheels and Snake.
- **Wheels:** An adopted student; in a later episode Spike asks him about adoption.
- **Lucy:** A popular student who has a lot of parties since her parents are often away.

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Lesson 1 – Thinking About the Video

Objective

The objective of this lesson is to help students consider issues about teen pregnancy and sexuality that are raised by the video. By focusing their attention on the characters in the program, students can often discuss their feelings more freely than if they were talking about their own experiences.

Procedure

Before class, photocopy the accompanying handout (pp. 66–67). After viewing the video in class, distribute the worksheet for students to complete as homework. Alternatively, you may want to use the questions on the handout to lead an in-class discussion directly after viewing the video.

Some ground rules teachers should consider for discussion include: no name-calling or put-downs, only one person speaks at a time, confidentiality (what's said in the room stays in the room), no personal questions, and no use of actual names when describing real situations.

Adoption is complicated for some students to comprehend and they may be insensitive about the subject. No doubt there are students who are adopted in your class or school. To sensitize your students, you can discuss reasons why infants and older children are put up for adoption in the U.S. and other countries.

Also be aware that some students in the class may have fathers like Spike's who are not involved in their children's lives. This kind of situation can be extremely painful, especially during adolescence.

Discussion questions about sex roles or societal expectations for men and women can lead to heated debates. Students interested in pursuing this issue can examine how men and women are portrayed in advertising, movies, television, music, and music videos. This activity is well-suited to high school juniors and seniors.

Other topics worthy of research include teen pregnancy, teen parenting programs, custody and child-support laws, abortion, consent, contraceptive availability and effectiveness, adoption, welfare, foster care, and the cost of child rearing.

Lesson 2 – Parent/Adult Interview

Objective

This activity will help facilitate discussion between adults and students about parenting responsibilities.

Procedure

Before class, photocopy the accompanying handout (pp. 68–69) and distribute it to the class as a homework activity.

For this activity, students should be offered the option of interviewing any adult with children (parent or other relative, teacher, friend).

Sometimes adults are happy to have the opportunity to share their views with a child, but not as eager to have their opinions shared with the class. When interviews are being discussed in class, if any of the adults interviewed do not want their answers discussed, students can focus on how the adult's responses made them feel.

After listening to individual presentations, have the class discuss the three student questions. It may be worthwhile to make lists on the board of student responses to each question. Students should be encouraged to examine how they as parents would handle discipline, allowance, privileges, vacations, and rules (phone, curfew, hair, clothes, music, television, language, dating, room condition).

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Lesson 3 – Deciding When

Objective

The objective of this lesson is to help students explore their values about sexual involvement. Students will decide what factors are most important to consider when deciding whether or not to become sexually active and compare their values with their classmates'.

Procedure

Before class, photocopy the accompanying handout (p. 70). Distribute the worksheets for students to complete. Explain the assignment, read through the choices, and answer any questions students may have about each issue. Make it clear that everyone's opinions are valid and should be respected.

Allow students about five minutes to number their priorities. Then pair students with a same-sex partner to compare answers. Pairs should put an asterisk on three values they both agree are important. Then pair students with an opposite-sex partner and ask them to find three values (put a check next to these) that they agree on. If they can't agree, they should discuss why.

Tally the results for the class. Have each pair report their top three and keep count of how often each is mentioned on the board. Discuss the results and look at some of the factors in greater depth. For example, if students value how long a couple has been going out, inquire how long it should be. If they say age is important, how old is old enough?

When doing this assignment, be aware that boys and girls may have different values and have a hard time agreeing. Encourage them to examine their choices and why they feel differently. Explain that sexist attitudes hurt both men and women.

Some students may already be sexually active. It is important, however, for them to feel that these issues are still worth examining and that they still have the right to make choices about having sex.

If any students are being sexually abused, this assignment may be difficult and they may withdraw from the discussion (although this could also be due to many other factors, such as embarrassment). Be sensitive to these students and perhaps mention their unusual silence after class or alert someone trained to intervene.

Lesson 4 – Love Songs

Objective

By looking at the lyrics of current songs, students will examine attitudes toward love, sex, and relationships expressed in popular culture and compare these attitudes with their own.

Procedure

Photocopy the handout (p. 71) and pass it out to students as a homework assignment. If possible, have students bring in tapes of the songs they choose so that all students can listen to the lyrics before they are discussed in class. Older students could use this activity to explore attitudes toward women in music and music videos.

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Thinking About the Video

Directions: Answer the following questions based on the *Degrassi Junior High* episode "It's Late," when Spike finds out she's pregnant.

1. At one point, Spike blames Shane for their situation and says it was his fault. He tells her she could have stopped him. Whose responsibility do you think it is? Why? Is there a role that the male or female is expected to play? What is it?

2. To explain their sexual experience, Spike says, "It just happened." Why do you think so many teenage girls become pregnant? Do they know about birth control? Why don't they use it? Who is responsible for birth control?

3. Spike and her boyfriend Shane discuss three options: abortion, adoption, or keeping the baby. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each choice?

abortion

adoption

keeping the baby

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4. What do you think Spike should do and why?

5. How much say should Shane have in the decision? Explain your answer.

6. Suppose Spike wants to have an abortion and Shane wants to keep the baby. What should the decision be and why?

7. Suppose Spike wants to keep the baby and Shane wants her to have an abortion. Should he be obligated financially to support this child? Why or why not?

8. What do you think of Spike's mother's reaction? What would you do if you were Spike's mom?

9. What do you think can be done to cut down the number of unwanted teenage pregnancies?

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Parent/Adult Interview

Directions: Ask a parent, guardian, or other adult with children the following questions and write down his or her responses. Then answer the student questions.

1. What were the biggest changes you had to make in your life after having children?

2. What is the best part about having children?

3. What is the hardest part about being a parent or guardian?

4. When you decided to become a parent or guardian, what did you want to make sure you did differently from your own parents? What traditions/customs did you want to keep?

5. What do you think I should know about being a parent?

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Student Questions

1. What do you think you will do differently from your own parents or guardian if you become a parent?

2. In what ways do you think you would be similar?

3. If a license were required in order to become a parent, what do you think a person should need in order to qualify? What do you think should immediately disqualify a person from parenthood?

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Deciding When

Directions: Choose five factors below that you consider important when deciding whether or not to get sexually involved with someone. Rate them in order of importance ("1" being the most important).

I care about:

____ who will be responsible for birth control and if it is going to be (or already is) used.

____ whether or not I am married.

____ what other people would think/say/do if they found out.

____ what would happen if my parents found out.

____ whether I love this person and he or she loves me.

____ knowing/talking about what we would do if there were a pregnancy.

____ making sure I won't get a sexually transmitted disease such as herpes, chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, or AIDS.

____ knowing/talking about what makes my partner (or myself) feel safe or uncomfortable.

____ how I will feel afterwards.

____ if I want to get involved or if I feel pressured to do so.

____ how my family (or religion) feels about sex before marriage.

____ if my other friends are also doing it.

____ where we were going to be (i.e., how much privacy).

____ how attractive the other person is.

____ how long we have been going out.

____ how old I am or how old the other person is.

____ what the other person will think of me if I have sex.

Explain why you chose your top three.

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Love Songs

Directions: Choose a song that you like about love, friendship, or relationships. If possible, bring in a tape of the song. Answer the following questions about your selection.

1. What is the name of the song?

2. Who sings it?

3. Write down one verse of the song that deals with love or some aspect of relationships.

4. What is the singer's attitude about love or relationships? Is it clear why the singer feels this way? Explain.

5. In what ways do you agree or disagree with this attitude?

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Readings and Resources

Readings

An Easy Guide to Loving Carefully, by Lyn McKee, Winifred Kempton, and Lynee Stiggall. Santa Cruz, CA: Network Publications. Information about contraception for adolescents.

It's O.K. If You Don't Love Me, by Norma Klein. New York. Fawcett, 1982.

It Won't Happen to Me: Teenagers Talk About Pregnancy, by Paula McGuire. New York: Delta, Delacorte Press, 1983.

Jason's Women, by Jean Davies Okimoto. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986.

Lauren, by Harriet Mandelay Luger. New York: Viking Press, 1979.

Love and Sex and Growing Up, by Eric Johnson. New York: Bantam Books, 1990. (for grades 4–8)

Love and Sex in Plain Language, by Eric Johnson. New York: Bantam Books, 1988. (for grades 7-12)

Seduction Lines Heard 'Round the World and Answers You Can Give, by Sol Gordon. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988.

What Teenagers Want to Know About Sex: Questions and Answers, a publication of the Boston Children's Hospital with Dr. Robert P. Masland Jr. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co.,1988.

What to Do If You or Someone You Know Is Under 18 and Pregnant, by Arlene Richards and Irene Willis. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1983.

You Would If You Loved Me, by Sol Gordon. New York: Bantam, 1978.

Related Video

"Dreamworlds: Desire, Sex and Power in Rock Video." This video about women in MTV by U. Mass. professor Sut Jhally is available from the Department of Communication, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, MA 01003.

Resources and Hotlines

Child Welfare League
440 First Street NW, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20001
Information and referrals, alternatives to abortion.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America
810 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10019
(800) 777-1740 (National Hotline)

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Credits

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For Massachusetts Teachers
Massachusetts teachers can borrow the curriculum and/or the corresponding videos from the eight Massachusetts Regional Prevention Centers.

Greater Boston (Suffolk County)
The Prevention Center The Medical Foundation
(617) 451-0049

Metro Boston (Norfolk County)
Prevention Resources South Shore
Council on Alcoholism
(617) 449-8823

Metro Boston (South Middlesex County)
Mount Auburn Hospital
Prevention and Training Center
(617) 893-0111

Merrimack Valley
The Psychological Center's Prevention Network
(508) 685-1337

North Shore (Essex County)
Prevention Services Center for Addictive Behaviors
(508) 745-8890 or (800) 334-5512

Southeastern Massachusetts
AFR/Pathway Prevention Center
(508) 946-3444

Western Massachusetts
Prevention One Multi-Service Health, Inc.
(413) 584-3880

Central Massachusetts
Tri-Prevention First No. Central Alcoholism Commission
(508) 752-8083

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